



1 November 2004



## November Holiday Safety

1. We will celebrate two special holidays in November: Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. Veterans Day is observed to honor those who have served with the U.S. Armed Forces. Thanksgiving provides an opportunity for us to give thanks for our bounty and our freedom.
2. November is also the traditional beginning of the winter holiday season in our colder climates. Many of us who are not deployed will be taking advantage of the long weekends this month to travel or participate in winter sports. As always, leaders must conduct "Under the Oak Tree" meetings with Soldiers before allowing them to go on pass or leave. Soldiers must openly discuss their plans with their leaders, and leaders must approve their travel plans before granting the time off. We must all take responsibility for our actions, and make good risk-management decisions, both on and off duty.
3. We face a tough challenge this holiday season. The Secretary of Defense has directed DOD to reduce accidents by 50 percent by the end of FY 05. Overall, USAREUR is closing in on that goal, and I am sure we can achieve it; but we have already had one fatality this fiscal year, and the long winter in USAREUR is just beginning.
4. Over the next several months, the safety of our redeploying Soldiers will be our primary concern. Past redeployments have shown that when units first return to their garrisons, Soldiers concentrate on completing reintegration and reconstitution tasks; but 90 and 120 days after redeploying, they begin to lose their focus. Many start taking shortcuts, and some become involved in high-risk activities. The number of indiscipline indicators (such as drunk-driving incidents) starts to climb, and accidents begin to happen. Leaders at all levels must recognize the dangers facing our redeploying troops during this timeframe and take steps to mitigate risks. Soldiers must be informed of these dangers and reminded to maintain their risk-management focus at all times. We must not let down our guard.
5. For our non-deployed Soldiers, enjoy the holidays and take time for yourselves and your families. Take care of each other and—above all—remain ever-vigilant. For the families of our deployed troops, thank you for your continued support to your Soldiers. You are all great patriots. *No Loss of Life* is our goal this holiday season. Do not let anyone die on your watch as we continue to execute with excellence, Any Mission, Anywhere.

B. B. BELL  
General, USA  
Commanding

**ANY MISSION, ANYWHERE!**

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